

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 3811

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E.. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OREP, KS

SUBJECT: ROK PARLIAMENTARY VISIT TO U. S.

REF: STATE 114109

1. IN PAST WEEKS SPEAKER CHONG IL- KWON HAS MENTIONED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS HIS INTENTION STOP OFF TO VISIT WASHINGTON WHILE LEADING A BIPARTISAN DELEGATION TO SEVERAL LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES. CHONG HAS GIVEN US NO DETAILED INFORMATION AS TO HIS PLANS. WE UNDERSTAND FROM ONE ASSEMBLY SOURCE THAT FINAL ARRANGEMENTS ARE NOT YET FIRM FOR LATIN AMERICAN TRIP WHICH APPARENTLY WILL TAKE PLACE SOMETIME IN JULY.

2. IN ADDITION TO CHONG IL- KWON' S GROUP, VICE SPEAKERS YI CHOL- SUNG AND KIM CHIN- MAN HAVE DISCUSSED VISITS TO WASHINGTON IN EARLY SUMMER. (YI IS PLANNING TO JOIN CHONG IN WASHINGTON FOR SOUTH AMERICAN TRIP.) NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY ASSEMBLYMEN KIM YONG- SAM, CHONG HAE- YONG AND O SE- UNG HAVE INDICATED THEIR INTENTION TO GO TO U. S. ON THEIR OWN DURING RECESS. DEFENSE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN, GEN. CHOE YONG- HUI ALSO HAS AMORPHOUS PLAN TO LEAD A " PRIVATE VISIT" OF SEVERAL DEFENSE COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO U. S. SEVERAL OTHER ASSEMBLYMEN MAY ALSO PASS THROUGH WASHINGTON.

3. VISITS TO WASHINGTON WITH HIGH LEVEL USG
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ATTENTION ARE ESTABLISHED ELEMENT OF PRESTIGE GAME FOR KOREAN OFFICIALS, AND A CHANCE FOR THIS SORT OF TRAVEL IS ONE OF FEW ATTRACTIONS OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE EMASCULATED NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. KOREANS SEEK A CONGRESSIONAL INVITATION TO PARLIAMENTARIANS FOR TWO REASONS:

A. TO SERVE AS JUSTIFICATION FOR TRIP AND AS WELL-PUBLICIZED EVIDENCE OF U. S. ACCEPTANCE OF NEW ROK GOVERNMENTAL SYSTEM, AND

B. TO ASSURE THAT PARLIAMENTARY GROUP WOULD GET APPROPRIATE TREATMENT WHILE IN WASHINGTON AND BE RECEIVED AT HIGH LEVELS IN CONGRESS AND EXECUTIVE BRANCH.

4. INFLUENCE PEDDLERS LIKE TONGSON PARK, IF THEY CAN INSERT THEMSELVES AS GO- BETWEENS, ALSO FIND VISITS USEFUL IN STRENGTHENING THEIR CREDENTIALS IN BOTH SEOUL AND WASHINGTON. THE ROKG HAS THE MONEY, AND THERE IS LITTLE THAT WE CAN DO HERE TO STOP THIS KIND OF TRAVEL.

5. ON SPECIFIC QUESTION RAISED BY REFTEL, AND ACCEPTING THAT SOME ASSEMBLYMEN WILL COME ANYWAY, WE SEE NO BENEFIT TO THE U. S. IN A FORMAL INVITATION FROM THE SPEAKER. ON ASSUMPTION THAT DEPARTMENT STILL BELIEVES INFLUX OF KOREAN MP'S ATTEMPTING TO LOBBY FOR MAP AND TROOP LEVELS IS UNDESIRABLE (STATE 104163) WE HAVE BEEN QUIETLY DISCOURAGING PLANS FOR VISITS BUT NOT WITH MUCH SUCCESS. NEVERTHELESS, IT WOULD SEEM UNWISE TO ENCOURAGE SOMETHING WE WANT TO KEEP TO IRREDUCIBLE MINIMUM. IN ANY EVENT, DEPARTMENT IS BETTER ABLE THAN WE ARE TO DETERMINE ADVISABILITY OF ROK PARLIAMENTARY VISITS AT THIS TIME.

6. SPEAKER CHONG IS IN CONSTANT CONTACT WITH ME, AND IF HE WANTS AN INVITATION FROM SPEAKER ALBERT HE WOULD NOT HESITATE A MOMENT TO APPROACH ME ON IT. AS A MATTER OF GENERAL PRINCIPLE I BELIEVE WE SHOULD KEEP OUR GOVT TO GOVT COMMUNICATIONS OUT OF INFORMAL CHANNELS LIKE TONGSON PARK AND MAKE IT CLEAR THAT ROK EMBASSY IS THE APPROPRIATE POINT OF CONTACT IN WASHINGTON.

7. MY GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS ON VISITING KOREAN
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MP'S ARE THAT WE:

A. CONTINUE TO RECEIVE THEM COURTEOUSLY AS THEY DO OUR CONGRESSMEN. (CONGRESSIONAL FRIENDS OF KOREA WILL UNDOUBTEDLY CONTINUE TO RETURN HOSPITALITY EXTENDED TO THEM HERE).

B. LEAVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SCHEDULES AND CALLS AND
RESPONSIBILITY FOR VISITORS IN HANDS OF ROK EMBASSY
WASHINGTON.

C. RECOMMEND TO SPEAKER' S OFFICE THAT FORMAL INVITATION
NEED NOT BE ISSUED, BUT THAT ROK EMBASSY BE INFORMED THAT
IF SPEAKER CHONG' S PROJECTED TRAVELS SHOULD BRING HIM TO
WASHINGTON, THAT A CALL ON MR. ALBERT, OR SUCH
ENTERTAINMENT AS SPEAKER MIGHT THINK APPROPRIATE, WOULD BE
IN ORDER. THIS WOULD BE APPRECIATED BY CHONG AND IT IS
IN OUR INTEREST TO MAINTAIN OUR EXCELLENT RELATIONS WITH
HIM. PLEASE ADVISE IF THIS IS ACCEPTABLE SO THAT WE CAN
ALSO INFORM CHONG AND KEEP OUR CHANNELS TO HIM IN GOOD
ORDER.
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